

INDEXA



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From the Shack to Paradise in a few KCs

Annobon Island: 3C0R—1999 *by Elmo, EA5BYP*

In 1998, our good friend, Ramón Gómez de Salazar, 3C1GS, invited us to visit the Republic of Equatorial Guinea. It was during this visit that we began to envision a possible expedition to Annobon Island.

From the first moment we were aware of the difficulties a project of this scope would entail, but thanks to the perseverance of Ramón Gómez, we were able to meet the various officials in charge of approving our requests. I would like to acknowledge the kindness, interest, and attention that the Guinean authorities showed us at all times.

We had to wait ten long months until, in April 1999, Ramón Gómez told me the good news: he had the necessary licenses and permits to operate from Annobon. The happiness I felt at that moment was indescribable. I had in my hands the 3C0R licenses. Unfortunately, only four people were given permission to travel. We had planned for a larger group with the objective of covering various bands and modes at the same time.

The operators named in the licenses were: 3C1GS (Ramón); 3C1RV (Roberto); EA5YN (Vicente); and me, EA5BYP (Elmo). I remember the moment I phoned Vicente (EA5YN), my good friend and travel companion. We both agreed that we had to work very hard. An expedition to this island entailed many preparations, a lot of money, looking for sponsors, finding

transport, assembling equipment and materials, and choosing the most appropriate dates for good broadcasts that coincided with our vacations.

During the Lynx DX Group Annual Convention in May, 1999, we announced the great news, to the general delight of the attendees. The Lynx DX Group and the Clipperton DX Club took it upon themselves to contact clubs, associations, and, in general, all the DX community to request help with the expedition. The response was overwhelming and large associations, small groups of enthusiasts, and individual contributors made 3C0R a possibility.

3C0R takes shape

We selected September 12-26, 1999, for the expedition, and during our preparations we met daily with Ramón (3C1GS) who soon found a boat in Sao Tomé to take us to Annobon. I telephoned John, captain of the Nere-Balandra—a sailboat 12 meters long—to discuss our plans and get information on the rates, characteristics of the boat, and other technical details. The asking price was within our budget, even though the ship seemed a trifle small for sailing those complicated waters. At any rate, Alleluia! We were assured of transport. If the weather was good, the trip would take 24 hours.

From an operational point of view, our objective was to maintain three active stations, 24 hours a day. We had at our disposal three 570-D HF stations from Kenwood, two laptop computers to store and process contacts, an RTTY modem, two Yaesu 2100Z linear amplifiers, antennas donated by Bit-Radio and Cushcraft (two AB5Ms with 3-elements and 5 bands), vertical antennas donated by Telecom and Bi-Tronic, and Windom antennas donated by Grauta. Our pilot stations would be EA5BY (Tony), EA5FVY (Angel), and OD5NJ (Gaby).

On the night of September 11th we went to the Alicante airport to do most of our shipping since we had a lot of equipment and we wanted to do as much as possible ahead of time. This resulted in our first scare: each kilo of excess baggage cost us 4,200 pesetas (about \$27). We were able to pay for this because most of the equipment would stay on the island.

On the morning of the 12th, EA5FVY and EA5BRE accompanied us to the airport again to send us off and help with the heavy hand luggage we were carrying. We arrived at Sao Tomé the same day at 21:00z, where our friend, John, was waiting for us at the airport. We had to wait a long time to resolve all our business with customs, but we were grateful that finally all the boxes and radio equipment were with us. So far, so good.

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Troubled waters

That same night, John mentioned that weather conditions were deteriorating. A strong storm was brewing and would possibly last for three days, which would make our immediate departure difficult. The next morning we received a call from Ramón and Robert telling us that for personal and physical reasons they could not join us in the expedition, but they assured us they would be in daily contact with us from Malabo to guarantee us good logistics. That filled us with sadness. Only two operators remained.

The ship's departure for Annobon was scheduled for noon, and after clearing customs, we were ready to say goodbye to Sao Tomé. In the meantime, the storm grew stronger by the minute. After consulting with the captain, we decided to take a chance and leave in the late afternoon at 16:00z. Vicente filmed our departure and I prayed that the storm would not blow us back to Sao Tomé.

We sailed off to sea, unfurling a sail that had been cured by a thousand storms, helped by an ancient motor that broke down scarcely three miles offshore. We couldn't continue the day's run with only our sail and decided to send an emergency signal. Luckily, a Spanish boat fishing for shark promptly answered our call for help. It sent a small boat to pick up the damaged equipment. Three hours later we were able to leave at last, en route to Annobon. The journey was a real trial. John kept lamenting that he had not seen a storm as strong as the one we were enduring for many years. It would be 39 hours before we touched dry land again. I would like to acknowledge the courage and skill demonstrated by the captain and his co-captain—his wife, Ika—during the entire crossing.

We arrived at Annobon on the morning of the 15th. Before our eyes was a marvelous paradise in the middle of the ocean. After taking care of customs formalities we proceeded to unload our material, kindly assisted by the island's inhabitants. We were not in very good physical shape, but we managed to transport everything, walking through the streets of the capital, San Antonio de Palé, con-

stantly observed by numerous citizens who greeted us in perfect Castilian, something that gave us the strength to finally arrive at the rooms that would be our "shack" during the next few days. The Annobonese are a marvelous people, dedicated principally to fishing and whatever agriculture volcanic soils can give.

At noon we started to erect the Yagi antennas, to prepare the generators, the PCs and the rest of our equipment. At 17:00z we ate for the first time since we left Sao Tomé and after recuperating our strength somewhat, EA5BYP (Elmo), made the first call in the 20m SSB band. Meanwhile, Vicente (EA5YN), who was going to operate in CW, finished adjusting his equipment. The first station to respond was EA5BY, and the second one was my good friend, OD5NJ. From there on, the pile-up was tremendous.

At 19:00z, Vicente launched his first CW call, with NI4H responding.

Problems mount

We immediately realized that, among other problems, our PCs had been damaged during the trip and the amplifiers were not in good condition either. At midnight we decided to rest and recuperate for the next day.

The first thing we did early on the 16th was evaluate the damage suffered by the equipment. The PCs were definitely damaged and one of the amplifiers was out of commission, but fortunately, we managed to make the other work. The generators gave us trouble several times, but we were able to repair them. In any case, when they broke down, we had to leave the shack to repair them. All this put limits on our time for rest, and we could not sleep more than three and a-half hours each day, but the healthy food, based on fish and fruit, helped us recuperate immediately.

Without losing our enthusiasm, and even less our hopes, we started to activate the different bands. In spite of all our efforts, and much to our sorrow, it was not possible to work RTTY, 6m,

and 160m.

The pile-ups were terrible. It had been a long time since we had seen so much excitement as was provoked with 3C0R. At every moment we were aware of the importance of our operation and we wanted to repay the trust that the world of ham radio had deposited on us.

The local authorities showed daily their interests in our operation and we received a pleasant visit from Father Edelmiro, of the Claretians, offering us his help. His conversation touched on interesting aspects of the daily life of the island and its inhabitants. At noon on the 23rd we finished our expedition amidst news of a new storm brewing. The last station worked in CW was G3UDW and in SSB was RA3AJ. We achieved a total of 23,000 contacts and operated in 16 bands/modes. When we left the island, we left a complete HF station, including a Yagi Cushcraft antenna.

In the not too distant future, we thinking of a collaboration and solidarity project with the people of Annobon, similar to the joint project realized some time ago with the DX group in Cuba. If anybody is interested in this project please contact us.

Thank you

We want to thank 3C1GS for his inestimable help and great effort, without which the expedition 3C0R Annobon 1999 would not have happened. We also extend our gratitude to Don Eleuterio Casas, Provincial Chief of the Island; to the authorities in Annobon; to the Annobonese for their kindness, congeniality, and the wonderful reception we received; to the Ministry of Transport and Communications; and to the Directorate of General Security of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea.

We also thank the associations, clubs, and individuals who put their trust in us by helping us economically; and the thousands of ham radio enthusiasts from all over the world who caused the pile-up from 3C0R to be the most listened bands in recent memory. To all of you, THANK YOU.

—EA5BYP, Elmo; and EA5YN, Vic; Team 3C0R

Board of Directors loses member

Because of health problems, Chuck Hutchinson, K8CH, made a difficult decision and regretfully requested that he not be placed on the 1999-2000 ballot for reelection to INDEXA's Board of Directors.

Over the years, INDEXA has benefited in many ways from Chuck's knowledge and expertise. One example is his assistance with the publication of *DXpeditioning Basics*, by Wayne Mills, N7NG.

We thank him for his service; however, this is not "goodbye." We look forward to a continuing relationship with Chuck who has volunteered future assistance in any way that will benefit INDEXA.

DXpeditioning Basics Both sides of the pileup

INDEXA is pleased to be involved in Wayne Mill's, N7NG, publication, *DXpeditioning Basics*.

At first glance, the book appears to be written for those who are going on DXpeditions, but a closer look reveals that it also addresses those of us who play radio from our home.

The best way for a DXer to work a DXpedition is to know the DXpeditioner's plan of attack before starting the hunt for a new one.

But what if you understand the DXpeditioner's operating pattern and you still haven't made a contact? Wayne answers this question by explaining the DXpeditioner's expectations of *you*! When both parties follow a standard method of operating, life is easier for both of you.

If you would like to know more about:

- DXpedition objectives and organization
- pileup management
- QSO mechanics
- frustration management
- QSL'ing policy, ethics, and more,

send US\$5 to INDEXA, POB 607, Rock Hill, SC 29731. For foreign airmail, add another US\$5.

Wayne Mills, N7NG

Chairman of the Board

INDEXA's Board of Directors recently elected Wayne Mills, N7NG, to replace Chuck Hutchinson, K8CH, as Chairman of the Board.

Born in 1942 in Palo Alto, California, Wayne was first licensed in 1953 as KN6ALH. He also held the calls K6ALH and W7JFG. In 1977, he applied for and received his present callsign, N7NG. Over the years Wayne has built a distinguished career, both as a DXer and a contester.

DXer

As a DXer, Wayne has operated as: ZL0AFZ, ZL0AFZ/9, 3D2NG, T32BT, HB9/N7NG, OH2/N7NG, ZS/N7NG, V5/N7NG/ZA1A, P40NG, P4/N7NG, and FO0MWA. Wayne has also operated from 4U1ITU, 4U0ITU, P40V, FO0XX, 3D2AM, AH3C/KH5J, XF4L, ZS9Z/ZS1, 9M0S, and V51Z. Most recently, he has operated as H40AA, BS7H, and BV9P.

Contester

As a contester, Wayne was part of the group at P40V that set the world record CQ WW SSB Multi-Multi in 1988. In 1990 it was a record Multi-Single. He set the Single Operator 20 meter CW world record in 1991. Wayne says that he

enjoys operating the ARRL CW DX contest from Wyoming, but he considers himself much more of a DXer than a contester.

DXpeditioning Basics

Wayne's experience as an operator on both sides of the pileup led him to write *DXpeditioning Basics*, a book of guidelines covering the operational aspects of DXpeditioning. The book, published jointly by the ARRL and INDEXA, covers topics that are important not only to those planning a DXpedition, but also to stay-at-home DXers.

Wayne is also a member of the DXCC Number 1 Honor Roll and is current chairman of the ARRL DX Advisory Committee.

Wayne and his wife, Margaret, have a son, Arthur, and a daughter, Katie.

Today, Wayne is the owner and manager of Jackson Wireless Two-Way Communications Sales and Service in Jackson and Pinedale, Wyoming.

(Source: Article by Chuck Hutchinson, K8CH, published in *DXpeditioning Basics*.)

New Life Members.....

| | | | | |
|--------|-------|-------|--------|--------|
| JH1XUP | BV2RS | PT2FR | KJ8F | AA5WE |
| W6TTG | DL1TC | N2NVU | JH1FTS | KE4SCY |
| PY2OGG | | | | |

Extra Help Provided By.....

| | | | | |
|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| LA8CJ | W5VCS | DJ9ZB | N2OC | K1KU |
| K6PZ | K1SRR | JH1XUP | WA4VA | PT2FR |
| KJ8F | KA2PHQ | K2AWE | VE7OJ | W5XYL |
| WDX3JFP | K6ME | K3FK | AB7RW | AA8CH |
| W5MTH | N7DV | WA8BIJ | WD6EYD | K6BC |
| VE3IQ | JF1AGB | AA7AV | KP4XJ | JH4BTI |
| N0SU | W3DR | W4USW | WB2O | N3AE |
| WF1M | K4ULA | W1MGP | K7WP | IK4AUY |

Election Results

The results of the 1999-2000 election are as follows:

President: W4WMQ
Vice-President: AA7UC
Secretary-Treasurer: W4UNP

Directors: N7NG*
LA8CJ
W4MPY
W4FRU
ZL1AMO
DJ9ZB

Vice-Directors: W9RG**
W8BLA

* Chairman
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